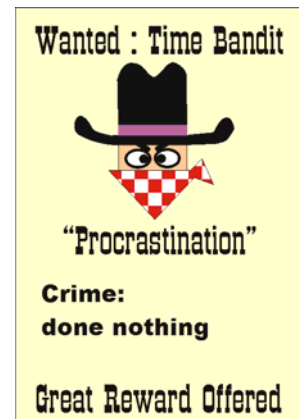




## What makes the time fly?



Of all the raw materials we use at work, time is often the most difficult to quantify. You can't see it or pack it into a box and it appears to be free (after all, you get a new day every day!) Although we measure time by clocks and watches, we do not always capture what "time" gives us - Opportunities. With opportunities, things can happen, without opportunities, not a lot will happen. For many people, up to 2 hours a day can be spent in unproductive activities - that's a lot of missed opportunities.



There are Time Bandits out there!  
So who steals our time then? We reckon there is a gang of "Time Bandits" out there and we think

their leaders are: "**Perfection**" and "**Procrastination**". The reward posters are right in proclaiming that great rewards are there for capturing these two. But will you be the one reclaiming your lost hours? It's not going to be easy to catch them because these two are both experts in disguising themselves.

Surely you have heard the one about Perfection disguising himself as "Approval Cycle". He made sure everything, no matter how minor, had to pass an approval panel in the name of perfection. Or what about when Perfection decided to become "Performance Overshoot", getting you to deliver something so loaded with extras, so perfect that the customer didn't know what to do with it (or want it).

His fellow bandit Procrastination wasn't going to be outdone by these time destroying exploits. Procrastination is a "confidence man" and he concentrated many of his "cons" in the information management field. You may have heard of the occasion when he convinced the project manager that "just one more bit of information" was needed before work could start.

Just how much are the Time Bandits costing us? One UK industrial sector reckoned that 95% of its activities are not-value added. That's something to think about: 95% of your time not exploring opportunities, not making the most of the resources available. The Time Bandits have a lot to answer for.

### The Rest of the Time Bandits

Our intelligence of other Time Bandits in the gang include:

- "Bureaucracy" - who insists that everything must be accompanied by forms, whether relevant or not.
- "Meeting" - this fellow always want to discuss everything formally and wipes you out with agenda, notices, minutes as well as running meetings that last too long with the wrong attendees.
- "Firefighting" - this one is always rushing around and insists that you drop everything to help him do this or that.

- “The Unexpected” - this is a mysterious stranger that comes around quite often. The problem is he never comes at the right time - when he gets here he drops off unexpected requests and delays everything. He is, we believe, Firefighting’s cousin.
- “Los Padres” - Padres is like your parent, he wants to know everything you are doing all the time and you spend a lot of time reporting to him about all kinds of minor details.

That’s what our intelligence tells us at the moment. Who’s on your reward poster? Tell us about your “favourite” Time Bandit!

#### Getting rid of the Time Bandits

Give both Perfection and Procrastination a big kick by asking “Why?” whenever they show up. You may need to ask “Why?” several time to get to the bottom of the whole situation. On your way there, you should check each answer against straightforward criteria such as: “Is this really adding value to our customers?” or “Does this simplify the job?” In fact, you can use many of the management ideas in our Periscope files™ to help you prepare the criteria.



Ask “Why?” often enough and acting on the common sense solutions, both Perfection and Procrastination (and probably their gang) will most likely not bother you again.